

THE WASHINGTON STAR  
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STATINTL

CORD MEYER

## How the Public Sees The CIA

Having written a book about a 26-year career in the CIA, this reporter has recently completed a tour, arranged by the publisher, of five major American cities. It's not clear yet how many books were sold as a result, but exposure to searching questions in a myriad of TV interviews and radio talk shows provided a unique insight into the current state of the public's perception of our intelligence services.

While demonstrating a refreshing capacity to think for themselves, the large majority of the questioners seemed convinced that at this stage the U.S. has to have an effective intelligence system capable of providing advance warning of impending trouble abroad. The Soviet military buildup has been accepted as an irrefutable reality and with that goes a wide understanding that the country needs to be better informed than ever before.

But if the long retreat from foreign involvement that began with Vietnam and Watergate has ended, those events have left behind abiding scars. Questioner after questioner probed the issue of how the secrecy essential to intelligence collection can be reconciled with an open society and how official secrecy can be prevented from masking domestic abuse or imprudent foreign entanglement.

On this point, the press has evidently done an inadequate job of explaining the significance of recent far-reaching institutional reform. Very few in this large audience understood that President Carter by signing on Oct. 14 the Intelligence Oversight Act provided for a depth of congressional review over intelligence operations that goes beyond anything previously entrusted to the legislature of any democratic nation.

Now embedded in our law is the right of the Senate and House intelligence committees to be kept currently informed on all intelligence activities to which they demand access. Detailed review of all programs by these committees and their suspensive veto over covert action operations are the best possible guarantee against the repetition of presidential abuse of secret power.

In reporting on this crucial reform, the press stressed the fact that it reduced from eight to two the number of committees that had to be informed of covert actions but failed to emphasize that these two committees have now been given the legal teeth necessary to become reliable watchdogs over the executive. There is admittedly a security risk in exposing so much sensitive information to the Congress but it is a risk worth taking in view of the deep public concern over the possible misuse of secrecy.

With the basic issue of congressional oversight now definitively resolved, there remains the question of how Ronald Reagan's advisers are responding to the public support for a foreign intelligence service second to none. The current answer is that these advisers are agreed on the need for strengthening American intelligence but seriously divided on how to do it.

Behind the closed doors of Reagan's intelligence transition team, three young Republican Senate staffers have been arguing that the CIA's performance and morale has sunk so low that only radical surgery can save the patient.

Drawing on ideas first surfaced in a report last year of the Republican National Committee, they are proposing to downgrade the role of the CIA by placing an intelligence czar in the White House staff. The operations directorate of the agency would be established as a separate organization and competing centers for producing national estimates would be created.

A majority of wiser heads on the transition team are opposing these plans for radical reorganization. On the basis of a performance record better than its critics concede, the CIA, they claim, needs to be supported rather than dismembered. The final decision will rest with Reagan's newly-chosen director of central intelligence, William Casey, and those who know him best do not believe that he intends to preside over the dismantlement of the agency he has just been appointed to head.

Casey is enough of an old Washington hand to recognize the wisdom of former CIA Director Richard Helms' advice, "To separate the president's principal intelligence adviser from his control of CIA is like removing the head from the body. A disembodied intelligence adviser cannot compete with the other claimants for the president's time and attention."

Another stabilizing factor is the recent selection by Sen. Barry Goldwater of an experienced intelligence veteran, John Blake, to become staff director of the Senate intelligence committee. With years of service in some of the CIA's top jobs, Blake is likely to look with a skeptical eye on drastic reorganization schemes which are partly motivated by the personal ambition of those who aspire to head the newly-created components.

Meanwhile, professional officers at CIA's Langley headquarters are waiting in some suspense for the outcome. They are encouraged by signs of wider public support and understanding of their work and hope that Casey will supply the continuity of competent civilian leadership that has so long been lacking.

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# VIP

## Memoirs of an Ambassador's Wife

By Maxine Cheshire

**F**IRST LADY Rosalynn Carter was very much on the Shah of Iran's mind when former CIA director Richard Helms and his wife visited the cancer-stricken monarch in his New York hospital in 1979.

"His bitterness over the behavior of his former Western allies kept intruding on our conversation," writes Cynthia Helms in her forthcoming autobiography, "An Ambassador's Wife In Iran."

The Shah kept asking, "Why did you want to destroy what we had?" she wrote, "in reference to his conviction that the Carter Administration wanted him out of the way and a new

government more to its liking in Tehran."

"Why," he asked, "did President Carter's wife write to the Empress, assuring us of American support, if you did not mean it?"

The White House is still denying that Mrs. Carter wrote anything but "a thank-you letter simply expressing her thanks for a visit and friendship."

"Reports that she expressed support were totally inaccurate," a spokesman said last week. "It was a courtesy, a routine thank-you letter from one First Lady to another."

In November 1972, when Richard Nixon informed Richard Helms that he was going to be replaced as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Nixon suggested that Helms might like to become this country's ambassador to the Soviet Union.

Helms, according to the new book by his wife, "was astonished."

"He realized that Nixon was quite serious," she writes.

Considering his background, Helms told Nixon he didn't think he had the idea and didn't think the Russians would think so either.

Afterwards, Helms kept reminding

never very good at small talk."

Cynthia Helms is a gentle woman and her memoir is not a gossip book, but there are some marvelous vignettes, particularly about the visits to Iran by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who "would eat anything put in front of him" and consumed so much, so frequently, that "he made the stewardesses on the Shah's plane very nervous."

"Where have you been?" he complained to one stewardess during a flight. "I haven't eaten in 10 minutes!"

Kissinger lost his appetite for caviar, Mrs. Helms writes, after being taken reluctantly to a factory on the Caspian Sea.

In 100-degree heat, a bilious Kissinger was forced to watch while a worker sliced open a sturgeon and removed the roe.

Kissinger became "unhinged," says Helms, turned a pale shade of green and fought back nausea.

Although Helms doesn't mention it, other sources claim Kissinger's visits cost the Iranian government three-quarters of a million dollars each.

Maybe less after he lost his appetite for caviar.

When the ladies arrived for luncheon at the Argentine Embassy last week, there was a six-foot stuffed white polar bear climbing out of the white marble fireplace in the dining

room like Santa Claus, clutching a pot of white narcissus.

The wife of Ambassador Jorge Antonio Aja Espil is never dull, and could end up being the leading diplomatic hostess in Washington in the Reagan Administration.

Especially since she and her husband hired Jaleh Panah, who helped Iranian Ambassador Ardeshtir Zahedi when he was the most popular party-giver on Embassy Row.

With style, attention to detail and a sense of humor, Ruth Aja Espil gives the kind of parties to which Reagan regulars are accustomed in Beverly Hills and Palm Springs.

She even folds and pleats her own napkins into artistic amusements, tucking 60 for one party to resemble tux shirts and fastening them with black silk bow-tie napkin rings.

At one Halloween party where the guest of honor had once been a CIA "agent-in-place" in South America long ago, rows of small "spooks" decorated the tables.

For an International Horse Show party, a silversmith in Argentina made tiny horse head favors for the female guests.

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# Haig: Trusted Defender of An Embattled President

## The General And His Record — I

Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., Ronald Reagan's choice to be America's next secretary of state, has had an extraordinary career in public service, one that has repeatedly put him at the center of the biggest political storms of recent American history.

Although Haig is a controversial selection for the Reagan Cabinet, his career has given him one indisputable credential. The president-elect could have found only one other American with comparable personal experiences to take over the State Department. That other person is Henry Kissinger, whom the Reagan camp rejected as too controversial.

That Haig should be acceptable when Kissinger is not illustrates one of the general's most striking qualities, his ability to win the favor of other people. Those ultraconservatives in the Republican Party who rejected Kissinger made Kissinger's protegee and former sidekick, Haig, their first choice for the State Department job. But he was also Kissinger's first choice. And Richard Nixon's. And Leon Jaworski's.

On the other hand, Haig is decidedly not the preferred choice of most Democrats in the Senate. Senate Democratic leaders have already promised to closely scrutinize the Haig nomination before voting on his confirmation. The Democrats, though, are now the minority party; Republicans will control the full body and the Foreign Relations Committee, and may be able to push the Haig nomination through the confirmation process relatively quickly.

Because of his involvement in the Indochina war, the wiretapping at the beginning of the first Nixon administration, the Watergate affair at the end of the Nixon presidency and other controversial episodes, a thorough Senate inquiry into Haig's past would be a drawn-out affair. Reagan, however, has indicated a desire to swear in his entire Cabinet on Inauguration Day, Jan. 20.

Today The Washington Post begins a series of articles on Haig's past, describing events that are likely to raise questions during the hearings and debate on Haig's nomination. In this installment, Haig's role in the Watergate period is reviewed.

Haig spent nearly 16 months as President Nixon's chief of staff. During that period, the White House devoted most of its efforts to defending Nixon from the charges of John Dean that he obstructed justice. Nixon spent long hours on his own defense during those months. But White House logs and accounts of dozens of former White House aides indicate that Haig spent even more time defending the president than Nixon did himself.

In May 1973, when Nixon realized that his two most trusted aides — H.R. (Bob) Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman — were going to be forced to resign because of their involvement in the Watergate affair, he turned to Haig. The general had been Kissinger's deputy at the National Security Council for the first two years of the Nixon administration, and was Army vice chief of staff on May 4, 1972, when the White House announced that Haig would be an "interim" chief of the presidential staff.

Haig was a favorite inside the Nixon White House. Just a week before he was asked to take over Haldeman's job, Haig had been the subject of an approving conversation in the Oval Office between Haldeman and Nixon. The topic under discussion was apparently one of the sensitive episodes that fell under the "Watergate" rubric, the trial in California of Daniel J. Ellsberg, the man who leaked the Pentagon Papers.

Haig did a great job out there, Haldeman told Nixon, according to a previously unpublished transcript of the tape recording of this conversation made by Nixon's automatic taping device. Nixon agreed with this assessment of Haig's testimony at the trial, where the general had been used as a prosecution witness to rebut testimony offered in Ellsberg's defense.

At the time Haldeman and Nixon talked, they and Haig were three of a tiny circle of men who knew that the Nixon White House had ordered 17 wiretaps on government officials and journalists' private telephones in the early months of the administration — a fact that finally became public knowledge five days later during the same Ellsberg trial. As a trusted confidant, Haig was unable to focus exclusively on policy matters as Nixon had hoped.

Instead, Watergate became Haig's preoccupation from the moment he arrived at the White House. One of his first acts was to ask the Pentagon's general counsel, J. Fred Buzhardt, to join the White House staff to deal with accusations against Nixon growing out of the Watergate affair. Haig, Buzhardt, lawyer Leonard Garment and Nixon's two principal speechwriters quickly went to work preparing a national security rationale for the wiretapping and other questionable activities that the presi-

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AM-HELMS 12-13

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- FORMER CIA DIRECTOR RICHARD HELMS, AS PART OF THE PLEA BARGAIN THAT HELPED HIM ESCAPE SERIOUS CRIMINAL CHARGES, AGREED TO TELL A FEDERAL GRAND JURY ABOUT THE AGENCY'S ROLE IN CHILE, IT WAS REPORTED SATURDAY.

HELMS, WHO WAS ALLOWED TO PLEAD "NO CONTEST" TO TWO MISDEMEANOR CHARGES IN 1977, AGREED TO TESTIFY IN EXCHANGE FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S RECOMMENDATION THAT HE NOT BE SENTENCED TO JAIL, THE NEW YORK LAW JOURNAL SAID IN ITS DEC. 22 ISSUE.

AN ADVANCE COPY OF THE WEEKLY LEGAL NEWSPAPER WAS RELEASED IN WASHINGTON.

THE PAPER BASED ITS ACCOUNT OF THE PLEA BARGAIN ON GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS MADE PUBLIC UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

HELMS PLEADED OCT. 31, 1977, TO TWO CHARGES THAT HE FAILED TO TESTIFY "FULLY, COMPLETELY AND ACCURATELY" BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE DURING THE PANEL'S INVESTIGATION OF CIA EFFORTS TO DESTABILIZE THE REGIME OF CHILE'S MARXIST PRESIDENT SALVADOR ALLENDE.

AFTER THE COURT PROCEEDING IN WHICH HE WAS FINED \$2,000 AND GIVEN A TWO-YEAR SUSPENDED SENTENCE, HELMS SAID HE WOULD WEAR THE COURT ACTION AS A "BADGE OF HONOR."

HE SAID HE HAD NOT TRIED TO MISLEAD THE SENATE, BUT WAS TRYING TO HONOR HIS CIA OATH "TO PRESERVE CERTAIN SECRETS FROM UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE."

THE NEWSPAPER SAID THE BARGAIN ALLOWED HELMS TO AVOID A PREVIOUSLY DRAFTED BUT NEVER FILED MULTI-COUNT CRIMINAL FELONY INDICTMENT AND ALLOWED THE GOVERNMENT TO AVOID BRINGING THE CASE TO TRIAL. OFFICIALS FEARED A TRIAL COULD EXPOSE SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE MATTERS.

BUT THE LAW JOURNAL SAID AMONG THE "UNDERSTANDINGS" IN THE ARRANGEMENT WAS HELMS' AGREEMENT TO "TESTIFY VOLUNTARILY AND COMPLETELY ... BEFORE FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS, A FEDERAL GRAND JURY, AND, IF NECESSARY, AT TRIAL."

THE PLEA BARGAIN, THE NEWSPAPER REPORTED, WAS REACHED AFTER INTENSE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN HELM'S LAWYER, EDWARD BENNETT WILLIAMS, AND TOP JUSTICE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS, INCLUDING NOW-ATTORNEY GENERAL BENJAMIN CIVILETTI. NEITHER HELMS NOR WILLIAMS COULD BE REACHED FOR COMMENT SATURDAY.

ANOTHER INFLUENTIAL WASHINGTON ATTORNEY, FORMER DEFENSE SECRETARY CLARK CLIFFORD, ALSO VISITED A TOP JUSTICE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TO ARGUE AGAINST AN INDICTMENT OF HELMS, SAYING SUCH CHARGES COULD DAMAGE THE U.S. INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY, THE NEWSPAPER SAID.

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STATINTL

## AN AMBASSADOR'S WIFE IN IRAN

*Cynthia Helms*. Dodd, Mead, \$12.95  
ISBN 0-396-07881-8

Politically sanitized and concentrating primarily on the hospitality aspects of diplomatic life, the author recalls her four years in Iran with her husband Richard Helms, former CIA director who served as our Ambassador in Tehran until 1977. She opens by relating a curious session between her husband and President Nixon at which Helms was dismissed from the CIA and offered the Ambassadorship to Russia—subtly suggesting that Nixon was unmindful of the repercussions of posting our head spy to that sensitive post. The Shah, on his part, presumably expressed no qualms about accrediting Helms to Iran. The author clearly found the assignment intellectually expanding and personally instructive; she toured archeological digs, studied the language, Islamic culture and religion. She offers no insider's revelations here vis-à-vis the U.S. and the then-brewing Iranian crisis and, disappointingly, concerns herself largely with discussing the pressures visited on foreign service wives. She is a fine writer and a shrewd observer, but in a book about such a volatile subject, a reader sometimes regrets her tact and self-restraint. Photos.

[January 26]

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REUTER

5 Dec 80

MR-NIXON

BY ARTHUR SPIEGELMAN

STATINTL

NEW YORK, Dec 5, REUTER -- PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON OFFERED TO NAME THE COUNTRY'S CHIEF "SPY" AS AMBASSADOR TO THE SOVIET UNION IN 1972, BUT THE MAN DECLINED -- SAYING THAT WOULD BE WRONG.

RICHARD HELMS, THE NORMALLY UNFLAPPABLE DIRECTOR OF THE CIA, WAS ASTONISHED BY THE OFFER, ACCORDING TO A BOOK BY HIS WIFE, CYNTHIA, TO BE PUBLISHED HERE NEXT MONTH.

IN "AN AMBASSADOR'S WIFE IN IRAN," MRS HELMS SAID HER HUSBAND WAS SUMMONED TO THE CAMP DAVID PRESIDENTIAL RETREAT ON NOVEMBER 20, 1972, TO BE TOLD HE WAS BEING RELIEVED OF HIS JOB AS CIA DIRECTOR.

AFTER SACKING MR HELMS, THE PRESIDENT ASKED HIM IF HE WOULD LIKE TO BE AN AMBASSADOR AND IF SO, WHERE HE WOULD LIKE TO GO.

MRS HELMS SAID THE PRESIDENT'S OFFER SEEMED TO COME OUT OF THIN AIR, "AS IF MR NIXON HAD NOT THOUGHT OF IT BEFORE."

AFTER MR HELMS SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO GO TO IRAN, MR NIXON SAID, "WHY DON'T YOU GO AS AMBASSADOR TO THE SOVIET UNION?"

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MR-NIXON 2 New York

MRS HELMS SAID HER HUSBAND WAS "ASTONISHED" BY THE OFFER BECAUSE HE REALIZED THAT MR NIXON WAS QUITE SERIOUS.

"DICK SAID BECAUSE OF HIS EXPERIENCE HE WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO GO THERE AND THE PRESIDENT NODDED HIS HEAD IN AGREEMENT."

MR HELMS' "EXPERIENCE" INCLUDED DIRECTING ALL INTELLIGENCE GATHERING CONCERNING THE SOVIET UNION.

MRS HELMS DOES NOT SPECULATE ON WHAT THE RUSSIANS' REACTION WOULD HAVE BEEN IF MR HELMS HAD ACCEPTED AND THEY WERE ASKED TO ACCEPT THE HEAD OF THE CIA AS AMBASSADOR.

MR HELMS SERVED AS CIA DIRECTOR FROM 1966 UNTIL EARLY 1973 AND FROM 1973 TO 1977 AS AMBASSADOR TO IRAN, THEN RULED WITH AN IRON HAND BY THE SHAH, WHO WAS HAPPY TO ACCEPT HIM AS AN ENVOY.

IN 1977, MR HELMS PLEADED NO CONTEST TO TWO CHARGES OF FAILING TO TESTIFY "FULLY, COMPLETELY AND ACCURATELY" TO A CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ABOUT SECRETS HE FELT HIS OATH AS CIA DIRECTOR FORBODE HIM FROM MAKING PUBLIC.

MOST OF MRS HELMS' BOOK CONCERNS HER ACTIVITIES IN IRAN AND THE GROWTH OF HER SYMPATHY FOR A PEOPLE SHE FELT WERE BEING DENIED BASIC FREEDOMS.

MRS HELMS ALSO REVEALS IN THE BOOK HER SOURCE FOR THE NIXON OFFER -- HER HUSBAND.